



Immigration Update

October 2026

Ohio's 2027 J-1 Physician Waiver Cycle Is Open: Applications Due by January 31, 2027

Key Notes:

- State 30 J-1 Visa Waiver Program is now open with applications due by January 31, 2027.
- Prompt attention by employers is critical as the number of available waivers is limited.

The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) has opened the application cycle for its 2027 State 30 J-1 Visa Waiver Program. Healthcare employers that plan to sponsor foreign physicians should act soon, as the program has a firm deadline and a limited number of slots.

What the State 30 Program Is and Why It Matters

Many foreign physicians come to the United States for clinical training on J-1 exchange visitor visas. These visas usually require the physician to return to their home country for two years after training before they can work in the U.S. on certain other visas or obtain a green card. Federal law allows each state to recommend up to 30 physicians a year for a waiver of this two-year home residency requirement. The program is widely known as the Conrad 30 program, and Ohio calls it the State 30 program. In exchange for the waiver, the physician agrees to work full-time for a set period at a facility or in an area that serves medically underserved communities.

For Ohio hospitals, clinics, and other healthcare employers, the program is an important tool for recruiting and keeping physicians. Waivers are limited and ODH reviews applications closely, so early preparation and careful

attention to the rules can decide whether an application succeeds.

Key Deadline

All applications must be submitted by **January 31, 2027**.

Action Items for Sponsors

- **Submit a Notice of Intent to Apply now.** ODH asks potential sponsors to complete and submit the Notice of Intent to Apply form as soon as possible.
- **Use the new submission email address.** Applications must now be sent to J1VisaWaiver@odh.ohio.gov. Follow the submission instructions in the application packet.
- **Use only the 2027 forms.** ODH will not accept forms from earlier years. Read all instructions and forms carefully.
- **Check everything before you submit.** Review every document for completeness, accuracy, and consistency.

Other Important Requirements

- **Multiple applications:** Sponsors that submit more than one application must name the same sponsor representative on each one.
- **Compliance history counts:** ODH will consider how well the sponsor has met program requirements for its current and past waiver physicians. Sponsors should make sure their records for existing waiver physicians are in order.
- **Hospitalists in Appalachian counties:** Sponsors of hospitalists in Appalachian counties may apply through either the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) program or the State 30 program. They

are not required to apply through the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC).

The application materials are available on ODH's program webpage: <https://odh.ohio.gov/know-our-programs/primary-care-office/workforce-programs>.

How We Can Help

Thompson Hine's immigration team regularly assists healthcare employers with J-1 waiver sponsorship. Our work covers the Notice of Intent and application packet, the follow-on H-1B petition, and ongoing compliance. With the January 31, 2027 deadline approaching and only a limited number of slots available, we encourage sponsors to contact us early for help with questions or preparing applications.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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